

3-30-08

To Marieke -

For peace and truth:

Dan Ellsberg

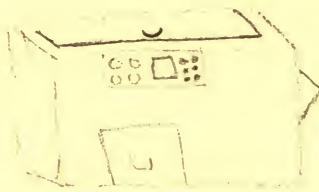
Marieke Thomas 0815
American Democracy
7th Period
3/24/08/CE

Journal Entry #6

Book: *Secrets* by Daniel Ellsberg

Pages: 286-322

Symbol: Photocopier



This section of the book describes how Ellsberg copied the papers. I think the photocopier symbolizes Ellsberg's bravery, in doing what he thought was best for his country despite great personal risk, and his selflessness, his willingness to risk going to prison to bring us the truth.

Quote: "A thought came into my head in the form of a rule: No one is ever going to tell me again that I have to lie, that I have a duty to lie, that it's all right just because someone's telling me to do it. No one is going to say that and have me believe him, or think I have to obey him." (Ch. 19, p. 291-292)

After reading a newspaper article about a military murder and the resulting conspiracy to cover it up, Ellsberg resolves to never unquestioningly accept orders to lie. This is not a sudden revelation; it is the culmination of a sentiment that has been building in him since his first day of work in the Pentagon. Nonetheless, it is a powerful feeling which gives Ellsberg the conviction he needs to go through with his plans to copy and publish the Pentagon Papers.

Summary: After reading an article describing the alleged murder of a Vietnamese man by several Green Berets, the charges brought against them, and the dismissal of those charges, Ellsberg resolved to stop keeping secrets and publish the Pentagon Papers. He called his friend and former RAND employee Anthony Russo, and together they, along with Tony's girlfriend Lynda, began to copy the papers. Meanwhile, Ellsberg and five other RAND employees authored and published a letter proclaiming their support for unconditional withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam. This letter, to Ellsberg's surprise, raised a hailstorm of criticism from his coworkers, who believed that he was endangering their jobs. The letter also caused Senator William Fulbright to invite Ellsberg to testify before the Foreign Relations Committee in Congress.

In class, we often examine the biases of the media, and the problems inherent in our capitalist media system. However, Ellsberg shows the media in a different, more positive light. He sees the media as a force for good, enlightening the American public about the actions of its government and military. For example, he speaks about the *Los Angeles Times* article, disgusted by its contents, but glad that the media published such an account. Ellsberg also makes positive use of the media when he published the RAND letter and later when he releases the Pentagon Papers. Clearly, for him the media is a positive source of information. What changed?

As we saw in class, the number of corporations controlling the media has been rapidly decreasing since the time this story takes place. This consolidation puts media in the hands of super-powerful, and also super-conservative, moguls like Rupert Murdoch. In Ellsberg's day, reporters leap at the chance to break a story like Ellsberg's; today, the mainstream media tires to cover up important stories like the fate of Saddam's elusive "Weapons of Mass Destruction" or the atrocities that occurred at Abu Ghraib prison. Today, in this war, we need whistle blowers like Ellsberg, willing to sacrifice themselves in order to stop an unjust war, but we also need a media willing to publish their stories, which, currently, we seem to lack.

This isn't my best report. Feel free to e-mail me
for one of the others at
maritinkerb@earthlink.net

I really appreciate hearing you speak about
current events, and I greatly admire your
past actions.

Sincerely,

Marie Thomas